

SPECIAL BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING AGENDA

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2016, 7:30PM

TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

Present: First Selectman Nina Daniel; Selectman Dennis Tracey; Selectman Chris Spaulding; Town Administrator Tom Landry; Superintendent Dr. Colleen Palmer, BOE Vice Chairman Ellen Uzenoff and BOE Chairman Phil Schaefer, Director of Finance Richard Rudl, Administrative Assistant Randi Derene; Finance Director Rick Darling; Department heads; residents and members of the press.

This meeting was recorded and videotaped. The tapes are available in the Selectmen's office. The meetings are available for viewing online via the Town's website.

Ms. Daniel called the meeting to order at: 7:30pm

Pledge of Allegiance- Phil Schaefer led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board of Selectmen review Board of Education's Budget-

Dr. Colleen Palmer presented the 2016/17 budget. Investments are being made in technology, keeping up with the transformation in learning. Effective School Solutions is also a key initiative for keeping special needs students at the school, reducing outplacements. Staffing has been adjusted due to declined enrollment. BOE is making a low request of 1.68%. Health Insurance is an area where there was a slight decrease. Attached is the Superintendents Executive Summary for an overview.

Ms. Daniel asked about the projected growth of \$3 million in the Internal Services Fund. Dr. Palmer responded that it is important to have funds in reserves for unexpected catastrophic claims. Ms. Daniel would like to know why we need an extra million in that fund. Dr. Palmer explained reasons including having a cushion, including switching from self-funded to third party insurance policies.

Mr. Spaulding asked about whether hiring one more teacher at the elementary level will be enough. Ms. Uzenoff said they would have a much better handle on enrollment in August. If they need additional teachers they would request a supplemental from BOF. They keep a close eye on enrollment and are very aware of "talent management"

Mr. Tracey asked about the \$270,000 was budgeted for the first year of the ESS program. He asked the BOE about other districts who have had ESS program and if they were able to reduce the number of outplacements. It is Dr. Palmer's expectation that there will be savings. There is data available but some information is confidential.

Ms. Daniel asked Dr. Palmer about the increase in the administrative budget. The increase in the administrative budget is due to a new school website and the addition of a new teacher. Ms. Daniel would like to put the website on the back burner. Mr. Schaefer stated that there would be a one-time \$45,000 upgrade fee and then an annual maintenance fee of \$26,500. Mr. Spaulding asked if the school priced this project out. Mr. Craig Tunks (Director of IT) stated they need to use Final Site since it is tied into the teacher's web pages.

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Mr. Louis Brey was called up to discuss staffing. As enrollment goes down, per pupil costs go up. Salaries and benefits are driving the budget up.

Ms. Daniel's vision for our Weston school system is to have a leading edge in technology. Mr. Tracey stated he would rather put make an investment today in technology – something that can pay off in the future.

Increase in technology budget will increase two positions from 10 months to 12 months and also add a clerical position.

Ms. Daniel asked where could we find savings? Ms Uzenoff stated that everything in the budget is needed. She did say that perhaps maintenance costs could be reduced if didn't want to continue maintaining facilities as we have been. Mr. Spaulding asked why the District is maintaining and replacing oil tanks given the use of natural gas. The possibility of saving funds by reducing costs for oil tanks was discussed.

A discussion ensued regarding moving the Copy Center to North House in Hurlbutt

Ms. Daniel said going forward she would like to see the Town and the schools try to collaborate more in regards to services. IT is now shared... perhaps there are other areas to be considered?

Ms. Denise Harvey (BOE) spoke regarding the schools strategic planning committee about exploring areas of revenue.

Mr. Landry added a review of how the town currently shares services.

Mr. Tracey asked that in future BOE Budget Reports he would like to see a section in the superintendent's report on how the BOE is using technology to improve and reduce the cost of education.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:35pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Randi Derene
Administrative Assistant

Approved March 24, 2016

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